

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

Chiefly designed for the Entertainment and Instruction of Youth; which, in a pleasing Variety, and by an Assemblage of interesting Histories, Tales, &c. of admired Authors, are calculated to attract their Attention, either towards contemplating the Beauties and Deformities of peculiar Virtues and Vices; or, towards such subjects and Events, which at particular Periods of Time may become Topics for Conversation.

MARRATON and YARATILDA.

AN INDIAN
TRADITIONARY TALE.



With additional Pieces applicable thereto.

EMBELLISHED WITH CUTS.

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SUBJECT

III.
Of the
American
Indians.

CONTENTS

Marraton
and Yaratilda, a Traditionary
Tale.

A Description
of the
American
Indians.

A Description
of the
Government
and civil Policy
of the American
Tribes.

An Historical
Example
of Indian
Magnanimity.

With marginal
Elucidations, References,
and Observations, &c.

To be published occasionally. Price Threepence.

[Entered at Stationers'-hall.]

OF SUBJECT III.

OF THE IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

THE third subject made choice of for the IMPORTANT TRIFLES, is founded on several circumstances, recently and repeatedly made public, respecting attacks made between the Europeans, or the descendants of Europeans, in America, and the original inhabitants of that quarter of the globe.

This TRIFLE will therefore represent to those who have already, or who may make such circumstances topics for conversation, a particular account of their civil policy and government, their characters and manners, their customs preparatory to commencing war, their remarkable sagacity and precaution in conducting their marches, their mode of fighting, &c. with several other particulars relating to the *American Indians*.

* * * The proper names of persons and places, and such particular circumstances and events, &c. which will be made choice of for elucidation and additional information, in the course of the work, will be distinguished by Italics in the body of the different pages, to which the marginal references will in a similar manner correspond, instead of making use of asterisks, &c.

GENERAL DESIGN.

THE design in the publication of these TRIFLES, is in one point of view, to attract the attention of youth towards that subject or event, which at any particular period of time may become a topic for conversation, and, towards contemplating the beauties and deformities of peculiar virtues and vices, which occasionally may, in any laudable or reproachful mode, introduce themselves into the general theatre of human actions; to furnish extracts from various authors, that may tend to assist the inquisitive mind, if inclined to join in an investigation, or enquiry, into such subject or event; or, towards contemplating any peculiar virtuous or vicious action which may excite observation or discussion; and, to hold up, as it were in a mirror, the objects mentioned, whether deserving of esteem, of pity, of detestation, or of resentment.

VARIETY is another principal point in view, in the publication of these TRIFLES, for the accomplishment of which purpose the different subjects contained therein, will consist of selections, either from history, poetry, short sentences, the sentiments of ancient philosophers, and of modern authors, fables, tales, novels, allegories, visions, essays, remarks, observations, anecdotes,

[On the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

MARRATON and YARATILDA.

AN

INDIAN TRADITIONARY TALE.

(1)
From wh.
selected, &c.Spectator.
Author,
Addison.
• • •

For an elucidation of the annexed print, see the marginal reference in p. 5. of this Tale.

THE Indians of *America* believe that all creatures have souls, not only men and women, but brutes, vegetables, nay even the most inanimate things, as stocks and stones. They believe the same of all the works of art, as of knives, boats, looking-glasses; and that as any of these things perish, their souls go into another world, which is inhabited by the ghosts of men and women. For this reason they always place by the corpse of their dead friend, a bow and arrows, that he may make use of the souls

America is denominated one of the four quarters of the world. The continent of *America* was discov. by Columbus in 1492. It received its name from *Americanus* who discov. S. Amer. in 1497.

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(2)

From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1,
of this Tale.

* * *

Indian :

The Indians unite in tribes, which are very numerous. Some of them are said, by Dr. Robertson, in his Hist. of America, to have no religion or belief in a future state.

MARRATON & YARATILDA, a Traditionary Tale.

souls of them in the other world, as he did of their wooden bodies in this.

Marraton, an American, is said by them to have descended, in a vision, by means of an aperture in a rock, to the great repository of souls, and that having travelled for a long space under an hollow mountain, arrived at length on the confines of the world of spirits, but could not enter it by reason of a thick forest made up of bushes, brambles, and pointed thorns, so perplexed and interwoven with one another, that it was impossible to find a passage through it. Whilst he was looking about for some track or path-way that might be worn in any part of it, he saw an huge lion couched under the side of it, who kept his eye upon him in the same posture as when he watches for his prey. The *Indian* immediately started back, whilst the lion rose with a spring, and leaped towards him. Being wholly destitute of all other weapons, he stooped down to take up a huge stone in his hand, but to his infinite surprize grasped nothing, and found the supposed stone to be only the apparition of one. If he was disappointed on this side, he was as much pleased on the other, when he found the lion, which had seized on his left shoulder, had no power to hurt him, and was only the ghost of that ravenous creature which it appeared to be. He no sooner got rid of his impotent enemy, but he marched up to the wood, and after having surveyed it for some time, endeavoured to press into one part of

Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

MARRATON & YARATILDA, a Traditionary Tale.

(3)

From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1,
of this Tale.
* * *

of it that was a little thinner than the rest, when again, to his great surprize, he found the bushes made no resistance, but that he walked through briars and brambles with the same ease as through the open air; and, in short, that the whole wood was nothing else but a wood of shades. He immediately concluded, that this huge thicket of thorns and brakes was designed as a kind of fence or quick-set hedge to the ghosts it inclosed, and that probably their soft substances might be torn by these subtle points and prickles, which were too weak to make any resistance against flesh and blood. With this thought, he resolved to travel through this intricate wood, when, by degrees, he felt a gale of perfumes breathing upon him, that grew stronger and sweeter in proportion as he advanced. He had not proceeded much further, when he observed the thorns and briars to end, and give place to a thousand beautiful green trees, covered with blossoms of the finest scents and colours, that formed a wilderness of sweets, and were a kind of lining to those ragged scenes which he had before passed through. As he was coming out of this delightful part of the wood, and entering upon the plains it inclosed, he saw several horsemen rushing by him, and a little while after, heard the cry of a pack of dogs. He had not listened long, before he saw the apparition of a milk-white steed, with a young man on the back of it, advancing upon full stretch after the souls of about an hundred beagles, that were hunting

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(4)

From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1,
of this Tale.

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*Western
parts, &c.
Vast tracks
of the west-
ern parts of
Amer. are
still inhabi-
ted by the
original In-
dians.*

MARRATON & YARATILDA, a Traditionary Tale.

hunting down the ghost of a hare, which ran away before them with an unspeakable swiftness. As the man on the milk-white steed came by him, he looked upon him very attentively, and found him to be a young prince who had died about half a year before, and, by reason of his great virtues, was at that time lamented over all the *western parts* of America.

He had no sooner got out of the wood, but he was entertained with such a landscape of flowery plains, green meadows, running streams, sunny hills, and shady vales, as were not to be represented by his own expressions, nor, as he said, by the conceptions of others. This happy region was peopled with innumerable swarms of spirits, who applied themselves to exercises and diversions according as their fancies led them. Some of them were tossing the figure of a coit; others were pitching the shadow of a bar; others were breaking the apparition of a horse; and multitudes employing themselves upon ingenious handicrafts, with the souls of departed utensils, for that is the name which, in the Indian language, they give their tools when they are burnt or broken. As he travelled through this delightful scene, he was very often tempted to pluck the flowers that rose every where about him in the greater variety and profusion, having never seen several of them in his own country: But he quickly found that though they were objects of his sight, they were not liable to his touch. He at length came to the side of a great

Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

MARRATON & YARATILDA, a Traditionary Tale.

(5)
From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1,
of this Tale.
* * *

great river, and being a good fisherman himself, stood upon the banks of it some time to look upon an angler that had taken a great many shapes of fishes, which lay flouncing up and down by him.

Marraton had been formerly married to one of the greatest beauties of his country, by whom he had several children. This couple were so famous for their love and constancy to one another, that the Indians to this day, when they give a married man joy of his wife, wish that they may live together like Marraton and Yaratilda. Marraton had not stood long by the fisherman, when he saw the shadow of his beloved Yaratilda, who had for some time fixed her eye upon him, before he discovered her. Her arms were stretched out towards him, floods of tears ran down her eyes; her looks, her hands, her voice called him over to her; and at the same time seemed to tell him that the river was unpassable. Who can describe the passion made up of joy, sorrow, love, desire, astonishment, that rose in the Indian upon the sight of his dear Yaratilda? He could express it by nothing but his tears, which ran like a river down his cheeks as he looked upon her. He had not stood in this posture long, before he plunged into the stream that lay before him; and finding it to be nothing but the phantom of a river, walked on the bottom of it till he arose on the other side. At his approach Yaratilda flew into his arms, whilst Marraton wished himself disencumbered
of

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(6)

From wh.
selected, &c.

MARRATON & YARATILDA, a Traditionary Tale.

As in p. 1.
of this Tale.

From the
annexed pas-
sage the
print in p. 1
of this Tale
is taken.

of that body which kept her from his embraces. After many questions and endearments on both sides, she conducted him to a bower which she had dressed with her own hands, with all the ornaments that could be met with in those blooming regions. She had made it gay beyond imagination, and was every day adding something new to it. As Marraton stood astonished at the unspeakable beauty of her habitation, and ravished with the fragrancy that came from every part of it, Yaratilda told him that she was preparing this bower for his reception, as well knowing that his piety to his God, and his faithful dealing towards men, would certainly bring him to that happy place, whenever his life should be at an end. She then brought two of her children to him, who died some years before, and resided with her in the same delightful bower, advising him to breed up those others which were still with him, in such a manner that they might hereafter all of them meet together in this happy place.

Marraton is also said to have had a sight of those dismal habitations, which are the portion of ill men after death; and that he saw several molten seas of lead, gold, &c. in which were plunged the souls of barbarous and wicked men

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Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

A
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
AMERICAN INDIANS.



(1)
From wh.
selected, &c.

Historical
Miscellany.
History of
Sandford &
Merton, &c.
The original
in History of
the Europ.
Settlements
in America.

* * *

For an elu-
cidation of
the annexed
print, see the
marginal re-
ference in
p. 4 of this
Description.

THE character of the Indians is in many particulars, remarkable and striking.— They are grave even to sadness in their deportment upon any serious occasion; observant of those in company; respectful to the old; of a temper cool and deliberate; by which they are never in haste to speak before they have thought well upon the matter, and are sure the person who spoke before them, has finished all he had to say. They have, therefore, the greatest contempt for the vivacity of the Europeans, who interrupt each other, and frequently speak altogether.

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(2)

From wh.
selected, &c.

A DESCRIPTION of the AMERICAN INDIANS.

As in p. 1.
of this De-
scription.

* * *

*Ill-timed
applause:*

What a contrast in their respective assemblies, between these uncivilized people, and the people of France, who pride themselves as being in their own opinion the most civilized in the world!

together. Nothing is more edifying than their behaviour in their public councils and assemblies. Every man there is heard in his turn, according to his years, his wisdom, or his services to his country have ranked him. Not a word, not a whisper, not a murmur is heard, from the rest while he speaks. No indecent condemnation, no *ill-timed applause*. The younger sort attend for their instruction. Here they learn the history of their nation, here they are inflamed with the songs of those who celebrate the warlike actions of their ancestors; and here they are taught what are the interests of their country, and how to pursue them.

There is no people amongst whom the laws of hospitality are more sacred, or executed with more generosity and good-will. Their houses, their provisions, even their young women, are not enough to oblige a guest. To those of their own nation, they are likewise very humane and beneficent. Has any one of them succeeded ill in his hunting? has his harvest failed? or is his house burnt? He feels no other effect of his misfortune than that it gives him an opportunity to experience the benevolence and regard of his fellow-citizens, who for that purpose have all things almost in common. But to the enemies of his country, or to those who have privately offended, the American is implacable. He conceals his sentiments, he appears reconciled, until by some treachery or surprise he has an opportunity of executing an horrible re-
venge.

Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

A DESCRIPTION of the AMERICAN INDIANS.

(3)
From wh.
selected, &c.

As in p. 1.
of this De-
scription.

venge. No length of time is sufficient to allay his resentment; no distance of place great enough to protect the object; he crosses the steepest mountains, he pierces the most impracticable forests, and traverses the most hideous bogs and desarts for several hundreds of miles, bearing the inclemency of the seasons, the fatigue of the expedition, the extremes of hunger and thirst, with patience and chearfulness, in hopes of surprising his enemy, on whom he exercises the most shocking barbarities, even to the eating of his flesh. To such extremes do the Indians push their friendship or their enmity; and such indeed, in general, is the character of all strong and uncultivated minds.

Notwithstanding this ferocity, no people have their anger, or at least the show of their anger, more under their command. From their infancy they are formed with care to endure scoffs, taunts, blows, and every sort of insult patiently, or at least with a composed countenance. This is one of the principal objects of their education. They esteem nothing so unworthy a man of sense and constancy, as a peevish temper and a proneness to a sudden and rash anger. And this so far has an effect, that quarrels happen as rarely among them when they are not intoxicated with liquor, as does the chief cause of all quarrels, hot and abusive language. But human nature is such, that, as virtues may with proper management be engrafted

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(4)

From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1.
of this De-
scription.

* * *

From the
annexed pas-
sage the print
in p. 1. of
this Descrip-
tion is taken.

A DESCRIPTION of the AMERICAN INDIANS.

grafted upon almost all sorts of vicious passions, so vices naturally grow out of the best dispositions, and are the consequence of those regulations that produce and strengthen them. This is the reason that, when the passions of the Americans are roused, being shut up as it were, and converging into a narrow point, they become more furious; they are dark, fullen, treacherous, and unappeasable.

Almost the sole occupation of the Indian is war, or such an exercise as qualifies him for it. His whole glory consists in this; and no man is at all considered until he has increased the strength of his country with a captive, or adorned his house with a scalp of one of its enemies. When the ancients resolve upon war, they do not declare what nation it is they are determined to attack; that the enemy, upon whom they really intend to fall, may be off his guard. Nay, they even sometimes let years pass over without committing any act of hostility, that the vigilance of all may be unbent by the continuance of the watch, and the uncertainty of the danger. In the mean time, they are not idle at home. The principal captain summons the youth of the town to which he belongs; the war kettle is set on the fire; the war songs and dances commence; the hatchet is sent to all the villages of the same nation, and to all its allies; the fire catches; the war songs are heard in all parts; and the most hideous howlings continue without intermission.

Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

A DESCRIPTION of the AMERICAN INDIANS.

(5)
From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1.
of this De-
scription.
* * *

mission day and night, over that whole track of country. The women add their cries to those of the men, lamenting those whom they have either lost in war or by a natural death, and demanding their places to be supplied from their enemies; stimulating the young men by a sense of shame, which women know how to excite in the strongest manner, and can take the best advantage of when excited.

When by these, and every other means, the fury of the nation is raised to the greatest height, and all long to embrue their hands in blood; the war captain prepares the feast, which consists of dogs flesh. All that partake of this feast, receives little billets, which are so many engagements which they take to be faithful to each other, and obedient to their commander. None are forced to the war; but when they have accepted this billet, they are looked upon as listed, and it is then death to recede. All the warriors in this assembly have their faces blackened with charcoal, intermixed with dashes and strokes of vermillion, which give them a most horrid appearance. Their hair is dressed up in an odd manner, with feathers of various kinds. In this assembly, which is preparatory to their military expedition, the chief begins the war song; which having continued for some time, he raises his voice to the highest pitch, and turning off suddenly to a sort of prayer, addresses himself to the god of war, whom they call Areskoni:

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IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(6)

From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1.
of this De-
scription.
* * *

A DESCRIPTION of the AMERICAN INDIANS.

" I invoke thee; (says he;) to be favourable to my enterprize! I invoke thy care upon me and my family! I invoke ye likewise, all ye spirits and dæmons, good and evil! All ye that are in the skies, or on the earth, or under the earth, to pour destruction upon our enemies, and to return me and my companions safely to our country." All the warriors join him in this prayer, with shouts and acclamations. The captain renews his song, strikes his club against the stakes of his cottage, and begins the war dance, accompanied with the shouts of all his companions, which continue as long as he dances.

The day appointed for their departure being arrived, they take leave of their friends; they change their clothes, or whatever moveables they have, in token of mutual friendship; their wives and female relations go out before them, and attend at some distance from the town. The warriors march out all drest in their finest apparel and most showy ornaments, regularly one after another, for they never march in rank. The chief walks slowly on before them, singing the death song, whilst the rest observe the most profound silence. When they come up to their women, they deliver up to them all their finery, put on their worst clothes, and then proceed, as their commander thinks fit.

Their motives for engaging in a war, are rarely those views which excite us to it. They have no other end but the glory of the victory,

or

Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

A DESCRIPTION of the AMERICAN INDIANS.

(7)
From wh.
selected, &c.

As in p. 1.
of this De-
scription.

or the benefit of the slaves which it enables them to add to their nation, or sacrifice to their brutal fury; and it is rare that they take any pains to give their wars even a colour of justice. It is no way uncommon among them, for the young men to make feasts of dog's flesh, and dances, in small parties, in the midst of the most profound peace. They fall sometimes on one nation, and sometimes on another, and surprise some of their hunters, whom they scalp and bring home prisoners. Their senators wink at this, or rather encourage it, as it tends to keep up the martial spirit of their people, inures them to watchfulness and hardship, and gives them an early taste for blood.

The qualities in an Indian war, are vigilance and attention, to give and to avoid a surprise; and patience and strength to endure the intolerable fatigues and hardships which always attend it. The nations of America are at an immense *distance* from each other, with a vast desert frontier, and hid in the bosom of hideous, and almost boundless forests. These must be traversed before they meet an enemy, who is often at such a distance as might be supposed to prevent either quarrel or danger. But notwithstanding the secrecy of the destination of the party that moves first, the enemy has frequent notice of it, is prepared for the attack, and ready to take advantage in the same manner of the least want of vigilance in the aggressors. Their whole art of war consists in this: they
never

Distance :
The discovered parts
of N. Amer.
only, are
computed at
upwards of
3 millions
and a half
of sq. miles;
and S. Ame-
at nearly 5
millions and
a half of sq.
miles.

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(8)

From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1.
of this Description.

A DESCRIPTION of the AMERICAN INDIANS.

never fight in the open field, but upon some very extraordinary occasions, not from cowardice, for they are brave; but they despise this method, as unworthy an able warrior, and as an affair in which fortune governs more than prudence. The principal things which help them to find out their enemies, are the smoke of their fires, which they smell at a distance almost incredible; and their tracks, in the discovery and distinguishing of which, they are possessed of a sagacity equally astonishing; for they will tell in the footsteps, which to us would seem most confused, the number of men that have passed; they even go so far as to distinguish the several nations by the different marks of their feet, and to perceive footsteps, where we could distinguish nothing less. A mind diligently intent upon one thing, and exercised by long experience, will go lengths at first view scarcely credible. But as they who are attacked have the same knowledge, and know how to draw the same advantages from it, their great address is to baffle each other in these points. On the expedition they light no fire to warm themselves, or prepare their victuals, but subsist merely on the miserable pittance of some of their meal mixed with water: they lie close to the ground all day, and march only in the night. As they march in their usual order in files, he that closes the rear, generally covers his own tracks, and those of all who preceded him, with leaves. If any

stream

Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

A DESCRIPTION of the AMERICAN INDIANS.

stream occurs in their route, they march in it for a considerable way to foil their pursuers. When they halt to rest and refresh themselves, scouts are sent out on every side to reconnoitre the country, and beat up every place where they suspect an enemy may lie perdue.

In this manner they often enter a village, whilst the strength of the nation is employed in hunting, and massacre all the helpless old men, women and children, or make prisoners as many as they can manage, or have strength enough to be useful to their nation.

They often cut off small parties of men in their huntings; but when they discover an army of their enemies, their way is to throw themselves flat on their faces amongst the withered leaves, the colour of which their bodies are painted to resemble exactly. They generally let a part pass unmolested; and then, rising a little, they take aim, for they are excellent marksmen; and setting up a most tremendous shout, which they call the war-cry, they pour a storm of musquet-bullets upon the enemy; for they have long since laid aside the use of arrows: the party attacked, returns the same cry. Every man in haste covers himself with a tree, and returns the fire of an adverse party, as soon as they raise themselves from the ground to give the second fire.

After fighting sometime in this manner, the party which thinks it has the advantage, rushes out of its cover, with small axes in their hands, which

(9)

From wh.
selected, &c.

As in p. 1.
of this Description.

* * *

Stream:
The streams of Ame. are immense; particularly the Mississippi, signifying in the Indian language the Father of Rivers; and the Ohio in N. Amer. also the river Amazons and the Rio de la Plata in S. Amer.

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(10)

From wh.
Selected, &c.As in p. 1.
of this De-
scription.
* * *

A DESCRIPTION of the AMERICAN INDIANS.

which they dart with great address and dexterity; they redouble their cries, intimidating their enemies with menaces, and encouraging each other with a boastful display of their own brave actions. Thus being come hand to hand, the contest is soon decided; and the conquerors satiate their savage fury, with the most shocking insults and barbarities to the dead, biting their flesh, tearing the scalp from their heads, and wallowing in their blood like wild beasts.

The fate of their prisoners is the most severe of all. During the greatest part of their journey homewards, they suffer no injury. But when they arrive at the territories of the conquering state, or at those of their allies, the people from every village meet them, and think they shew their attachment to their friends by their barbarous treatment of the unhappy prisoners; so that when they come to their station, they are wounded and bruised in a terrible manner. The conquerors enter the town in triumph. The war-captain waits upon the head men, and in a low voice gives them a circumstantial account of every particular of the expedition, of the damage the enemy has suffered, and his own losses in it. This done, the public orator relates the whole to the people. Before they yield to the joy which the victory occasions, they lament the friends which they have lost in the pursuit of it. The parties most nearly concerned, are afflicted apparently with a deep and real sorrow. But, by one of those

Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

A DESCRIPTION of the AMERICAN INDIANS.

(11)
From wh.
selected, &c.

those strange turns of the human mind, fashioned to any thing by custom, as if they were disciplined in their grief, upon the signal for rejoicing, in a moment all tears are wiped away from their eyes, and they rush into an extravagance and phrenzy of joy for their victory.

In the mean time the fate of the prisoners remains undecided, until the old men meet, and determine concerning their distribution. It is usual to offer a slave to each house that has lost a friend; giving the preference according to the greatness of the loss. The person who has taken the captive, attends him to the door of the cottage to which he is delivered, and with him gives a belt or *wampum*, to shew that he has fulfilled the purpose of the expedition, in supplying the loss of a citizen. They view the present which is made them for some time; and according as they think him or her, for it is the same, proper or improper for the business of the family, or as they take a capricious liking or displeasure to the countenance of the victim, or in proportion to their natural barbarity or their resentment for their losses, they destine concerning him, to receive him into the family, or sentence him to death. If the latter, they throw away the belt with indignation. Then it is no longer in the power of any one to save him. The nation is assembled as upon some great solemnity. A scaffold is raised, and the prisoner tied to the stake. Instantly he opens his death song, and prepares for the ensuing

As in p. 1,
of this Description.

* * *

Wampum:
Is composed of small shells or beads of different colours curiously arranged, and according to the arrangement convey a meaning to the Indians, in the like manner as written characters do to more enlightened nations.

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(12)

From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1,
of this Description.

* * *

A DESCRIPTION of the AMERICAN INDIANS.

ensuing scene of cruelty with the most undaunted courage. On the other side, they prepare to put it to the utmost proof, with every torment, which the mind of man ingenious in mischief can invent.

The prisoners, who have the happiness to please those to whom they are offered, have a fortune altogether opposite to those who are condemned. They are adopted into the family, they are accepted in the place of the father, son, or husband, that is lost; and they have no other mark of their captivity, but that they are not suffered to return to their own nation. To attempt this would be certain death. The principal purpose of the war is to recruit in this manner; for which reason a general, who loses many of his men, though he should conquer, is little better than disgraced at home; because the end of the war was not answered. They are therefore extremely careful of their men, and never chuse to attack but with a very undoubted superiority, either in number or situation.

The scalps, which they value so much, are the trophies of their bravery; with these they adorn their houses, which are esteemed in proportion as this sort of spoils is more numerous. They have solemn days appointed, upon which the young men gain a new name or title from their head-men; and these titles are given according to the qualities of the person, and his performances; of which these scalps are the evidence. This is all the reward they receive for the dangers of the war, and the fatigues of many campaigns, severe almost beyond credit. They think it is abundantly sufficient to have a name given by their governors; men of merit themselves, and judges of it; a name respected by their countrymen, and terrible to their enemies. There are many other things fit to engage the curiosity, and even afford matter of instructive reflection, in the manners of this barbarous people: but these seem to be the most striking, and are sufficient to give a general idea of them.

[Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

A DESCRIPTION

OF THE

GOVERNMENT *and* CIVIL POLICY

OF THE

AMERICAN TRIBES.

From wh.
selected, &c.Historical
Miscellany,
&c. the ori-
ginal in Ac-
count of the
European
Settlements
in America.
***

LIBERTY, in its fullest extent, is the darling passion of the American tribes. To this, they sacrifice every thing. This is what makes a life of uncertainty and want supportable to them; and their education is directed in such a manner, as to cherish this disposition to the utmost. They are indulged in all manner of liberty; they are never, upon any account, chastised

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(2)

From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1.
of this De-
scription.

* * *

A DESCRIPTION of the GOVERNMENT, &c.

chastised with blows; they are rarely even chidden. Reason, they say, will guide their children when they come to the use of it; and before that time, their faults cannot be very great: but blows might abate the free and martial spirit which makes the glory of their people, and might render the sense of honour duller, by the habit of a slavish motive to action. When they are grown up, they experience nothing like command, dependence, or subordination; even strong persuasion is industriously forbore by those who have influence amongst them, as what may look too like command, and appear a sort of violence offered to their will.

On the same principle they know no punishment but death. They lay no fines, because they have no way of exacting them from free men; and the death which they sometimes inflict, is rather a consequence of a sort of war declared against a public enemy, than an act of judicial power executed on a citizen or subject. This free disposition is general; and though some tribes are found in America with a head, whom we call a king, his power is rather persuasive than coercive, and he is revered as a father, more than feared as a monarch. He has no guards, no prisons, no officers of justice. The other forms, which may be considered as a sort of aristocracy, have no more power. This latter is the more common in North America. In some tribes there are a
kind

Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

Of the AMERICAN TRIBES.

(3)
From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1,
of this Description.
* * *

kind of nobility, who, when they come to the years of discretion, are entitled to a place and vote in the councils of their nation; the rest are excluded. But amongst the five nations, or Iroquois, the most celebrated commonwealth of North America, and in some other nations, there is no other qualification absolutely necessary for their head-men, but age, with experience and ability in their affairs. However, there is generally in every tribe, some particular stocks which they respect, and who are considered in some sort as their chiefs, unless they shew themselves unworthy of that rank; as among the tribes themselves there are some, who, on account of their number or bravery, have pre-eminence over the rest; which as it is not exacted with pride and insolence, nor maintained by tyranny on one hand, so it is never disputed on the other, when it is due.

This great council is composed of these heads of tribes and families, with such whose capacity has elevated them to the same degree of consideration. They meet in a house, which they have in each of their towns for the purpose, upon every solemn occasion, to receive ambassadors, to deliver them an answer, to sing their traditionary war songs, or to commemorate their dead. These councils are public. Here they propose all such matters concerning the state, as have already been digested in their secret councils, at which none but the head men assist. Here it is that their orators are employed, and display those talents which distinguish them

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(4)

From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1.
of this De-
scription.
* * *

A DESCRIPTION of the GOVERNMENT, &c.

them for eloquence and knowledge of public business: in both of which, some of them are admirable. None else speak in their public councils; these are their ambassadors, and these are the commissioners who are appointed to treat of peace or alliance with other nations. The chief skill of these orators consist in giving an artful turn to affairs, and in expressing their thoughts in a bold figurative manner, much stronger than we could bear in this part of the world, and with gestures equally violent, but often extremely natural and expressive.

When any business of consequence is transacted, they appoint a feast upon the occasion, of which almost all the whole nation partakes. There are lesser feasts upon matters of less general concern, to which none are invited but they who are engaged in that particular business. At these feasts, it is against all rule to leave any thing; so that if they cannot consume all, what remains is thrown into the fire; for they look upon fire as a thing sacred, and in all probability, these feasts were anciently sacrifices. Before the entertainment is ready, the principal person begins a song, the subject of which, is the fabulous or real history of their nation, the remarkable events which have happened, and whatever matters may make for their honour, or instruction. The others sing in their turn. They have dances too, with which they accompany their songs, chiefly of a martial kind; and no solemnity or public business is carried

on

Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

Of the AMERICAN TRIBES.

(5)

From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1.
of this De-
scription.
* * *

on without such songs and dances. Every thing is transacted amongst them with much ceremony, which in a barbarous people is necessary; for nothing else could hinder all their affairs from going into confusion; besides that, the ceremonies contribute to fix all transactions the better in their memory.

To help their memory, they have bits of small shells or beads of different colours, which have all a different meaning, according to their colour or arrangement. At the end of every matter they discourse upon, when they treat with a foreign state, they deliver one of these belts. If they should omit this ceremony, what they say passes for nothing. These belts are carefully treasured up in each town, and they serve for the public records of the nation; and to these they occasionally have recourse, when any contests happen between them and their neighbours. Of late, as the matter of which these belts is made, is grown scarce, they often give some skin in the place of the wampum, for so they call these beads in their language, and receive in return, presents of a more valuable nature; for neither will they consider what our commissioners say to be of any weight, unless some present accompanies each proposal.

The same council of their elders which regulates whatever regards the external policy of the state, has the charge likewise of its internal peace and order. Their suits are few and quickly decided, having neither property nor art enough to render them perplexed or tedious. Criminal matters come before the same jurisdiction, when they are so flagrant as to become a national concern. In ordinary cases, the crime is either revenged or compromised by the parties concerned. If a murder is committed, the family which has lost a relation, prepares to retaliate on that of the offender. They often kill the murderer, and when this happens, the kindred of the last person slain, look upon themselves to be as much injured, and think themselves as much justified in taking vengeance, as if the violence had not begun amongst themselves. But in general, things are determined in a more amicable manner. The offender absents himself; his friends send a compliment of condolence

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(6)

From wh.
selected, &c.As in p. 1,
of this De-
scription.

* * *

A DESCRIPTION of the GOVERNMENT, &c.

lance to those of the party murdered; presents are offered, which are rarely refused: the head of the family appears, who in a formal speech delivers the present, which consists often of above sixty articles, every one of which is given to cancel some part of the offence, and to assuage the grief of the suffering party. With the first he says, "By this I remove the hatchet from the wound, and make it fall out of the hands of him that is prepared to revenge the injury." With the second, "I dry up the blood of that wound;" and so on, in apt figures, taking away one by one, all the ill consequences of the murder. As usual, the whole ends in mutual feasting, songs and dances. If the murder is committed by one of the same family or cabin, that cabin has the full right of judgment without appeal, within itself, either to punish the guilty with death, or to pardon him, or to force him to give some recompence to the wife or children of the slain. All this while, the supreme authority of the nation look on unconcerned, and never rouses its strength, nor exerts the fulness of a power more revered than felt, but upon some signal occasion. Then the power seems equal to the occasion. Every one hastens to execute the orders of their senate; nor ever was any instance of disloyalty or rebellion known amongst this people. Governed as they are by manners, not by laws; example, education, and the constant practice of their ceremonies, give them the most tender affection for their country, and inspire them with a most religious regard for their constitution and the custom of their ancestors: the want of laws and of an universal coercive power, is not perceived in a narrow society, and where the whole bent of every thing they do is to strengthen those natural ties, by which society is principally cemented. Family love, rare amongst us, is a national virtue amongst them, of which all partake. Friendships there are amongst them fit to vie with those of fabulous antiquity; and where such friendships are seen to grow, the families concerned congratulate themselves as upon an acquisition, that promises to them a mutual strength, and to their nation the greatest honour and advantage.

Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE
OF
INDIAN MAGNANIMITY.



(1)

From wh.
selected, &c.

Bossu's
Voy. to the
W. Indies.

* * *

For an elu-
cidation of
the annexed
print, see the
marginal re-
ference in p.
4, of this
Example.

THE world has ever considered with the highest veneration, those who have devoted themselves to death, for the glory, or safety of their country and friends.

Regulus, Leonidas, the six famous burghers of Calais, with other great examples which occur in history, have in all ages been justly admired, as displaying the greatest nobleness of soul; whilst many particulars of their history have been esteemed fabulous by critics as beyond the powers of human resolution; and yet, in the

Regulus, &c.
The exam-
ples here al-
luded to may
be seen in
the work
entitled, the
Beauties of
History.

IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

[On the Subject

(2)

From wh.
selected, &c.Bossu's
Voy. to the
W. Indies.
* * *N. Orleans :
Is situated in
N. Amer.* French :
At the time
when this
circumst.
occurred the
French had
settlements
adjoining to
the Tribes
here menti-
oned.

HISTOR. EXAMP. of IND. MAGNANIMITY.

the history of those people, whom we call savages, and whom we are too apt indiscriminately to treat with contempt, and consider as incapable of any sentiment above the level of the animal creation ; in these we often find instances of greatness of mind which would do honour to the heroism and patriotism of the greatest and most polished nations. Perhaps the following interesting anecdote cannot be paralleled in ancient or modern history ; it happened in the neighbourhood of *New Orleans*, and may be considered as authentic, being communicated by M. Bossu, an officer of distinction, who then enjoyed a considerable command in that country.

“ The tragical death of an Indian of the Collapissa nation,” says this gentleman, “ who sacrificed himself for his country and son, I have often admired as displaying the greatest heroism, and placing human nature in the noblest point of view. A Chactaw Indian, having one day expressed himself in the most reproachful terms of the *French*, and called the Collapissas their dogs and their slaves, one of this nation, exasperated at his injurious expressions, laid him dead on the spot. The Chactaws, the most numerous and the most warlike tribe on that continent, immediately flew to arms ; they sent deputies to New Orleans to demand from the French governor the head of the savage who had fled to him for protection : the governor offered presents as an atonement, but they

Of the AMER. IND.] IMPORTANT TRIFLES.

HISTOR. EXAMP. of IND. MAGNANIMITY.

(3)
From wh.
selected, &c.Bossu's
Voy. to the
W. Indies
* * **Mississipi* :
A river of
great extent;
in the Indi-
an language
signifying
the father
of rivers.

they were rejected with disdain; they threatened to exterminate the whole tribe of the Collapissas. To pacify this fierce nation, and prevent the effusion of blood, it was at length found necessary to deliver up the unhappy Indian. The Sieur Ferrand, commander of the German posts, on the right of the *Mississipi*, was charged with this melancholy commission; a rendezvous was in consequence appointed between the settlement of the Collapissas and the German posts, where the mournful ceremony was conducted in the following manner:

“ The Indian victim, whose name was Tichou Mingo (i. e. servant to the cacique or prince) was produced. He rose up, and agreeable to the custom of these people, harangued the assembly to the following purpose: ‘ I am a true man; that is to say, I fear not death; but I lament the fate of my wife and four infant children, whom I leave behind in a very tender age; I lament too my father and my mother, whom I have long maintained by hunting: them, however, I recommend to the French; since, on their account, I now fall a sacrifice.’

“ Scarce had he finished this short and pathetic harangue, when the old father, struck with the filial affection of the son, arose, and thus addressed himself to his audience—‘ My son is doomed to death; but he is young and vigorous, and more capable than me to support his mother, his wife and four infant children: it is necessary then that he remain upon earth to protect

IMPORTANT TRIFLES. [On the AMER. IND.]

(4)

From wh.
selected, &c.

Bossu's
Voy. to the
W. Indies.
* * *

From the
annexed
passage the
print in p.
1. of this
Example is
taken.

*Roman Ora-
tor :*

This is re-
lated of
Quintus,
brother to
Cicero, and
his son.

HISTOR. EXAMP. of IND. MAGNANIMITY.

test and provide for them : as for me, who draw towards the end of my career, I have lived long enough ; may my son attain to my age, that he may bring up his tender infants : I am no longer good for any thing : a few years more or less, are to me of small moment : I have lived as a man ; I will die as a man :--I therefore take the place of my son.

" At these words, which expressed his paternal love and greatness of soul in the most touching manner, his wife, his son, his daughter-in-law, and the little infants, melted into tears around this brave, this generous old man : he embraced them for the last time, exhorted them to be ever faithful, and to die rather than to betray any one by mean treachery, unworthy of his blood. ' My death,' concluded he, ' I consider as necessary for the safety of my nation, and I glory in the sacrifice.' Having thus delivered himself he presented his head to the kinsmen of the deceased Chactaw ; they accepted it ; he then extended himself over the trunk of a tree, when, with a hatchet, they severed his head from his body.

" By this sacrifice, all animosities were forgotten ; but one part of the ceremony remained still to be performed : the young Indian was obliged to deliver to the Chactaws the head of his father : in taking it up he addressed to it these few words : ' Pardon me your death, and remember me in the world of spirits.'--The French who assisted at this tragedy could not contain their tears, whilst they admired the heroic constancy of this venerable old man, whose resolution bore a resemblance to that of the celebrated *Roman orator*, who, in the time of the triumvirate, was concealed by his son : the young man was most cruelly tortured in order to force him to discover his father, who, not being able to endure the idea, that a son so virtuous and so generous, should thus suffer on his account, went and begged them to kill him and save his son ; the son conjured them to take his life and spare the age of his father ; but the soldiers more barbarous than the savages, butchered them both on the spot."

otes, songs, epigrams, bon-mots, &c. &c. which may be applicable to the subject treated on.

The third point in view in the publication of these TRIFLES is, that under the pleasing assemblage of entertaining histories or descriptions, one or more which will be introduced in each publication, a more general collection of elegant and useful literature, and by the most esteemed authors, will be opened to those, particularly youth, who, from the expence which attends the purchasing of different volumes, have been kept back from the enjoyment of, and from a knowledge of the excellencies and beauties of English Literature, and who, instead thereof, have been happy in the accumulation of literary trash.

Finally, Several of these TRIFLES being bound together, of which twelve different subjects will make a moderate size volume, will thus form as an agreeable, miscellaneous, and even useful body of literature, as is to be met with in any of the compilations hitherto published.

*OBSERVATIONS and REMARKS, on the Manner in which these
TRIFLES are intended to be printed and published.*

THESE TRIFLES, as before observed in the general design, will consist of a miscellaneous selection of literature, and, are intended in the course of their publication to be adapted to one temporary subject, circumstance, or event, which will be observed in each TRIFLE; but, which nevertheless may, at the option of the reader, be adapted to a more general nature, and for which other purpose, not only a general head-line title will be given throughout, but also a head-line title to each distinct piece, both of which will be pag'd separately.

In order therefore to adapt them to the general nature proposed, in the first instance, the uppermost paging may either be cut off or remain on, and the several subjects be arranged alphabetically, agreeable to which they may be distinguished on the uppermost, or general head line, and to which titles will be adapted.

In the second instance, the various pieces may be separately arranged at the mere pleasure of the reader, for which purpose, each piece will be so printed as to be capable of being separated, and when so separated, and intended to be bound or sewed together, to be cut close underneath the general head line on the same page, with which every part throughout will correspond; and any reader ingeniously paging them in the centre after they may be so cut, in progressive order, and on a line with the page on each separate piece, may unquestionably claim the merit of being the EDITOR of such selection; and, further to encourage such literary emulation, title-pages to correspond with collections made therefrom, whether of Miscellanies, Poems, Songs, Histories, Tales, Categories, Dreams, Visions, &c. will be adapted to the diminished size, and a blank space for the name of any one who may wish to claim the literary approbation

approbation of their friends and acquaintance for their arrangement and choice of subjects.

Notwithstanding the small size to which the different pieces will be reduced after their being cut, any two volumes, or more, composed therefrom, will contain as much as any two or greater number of volumes, which form private collections, they, too generally abounding in subjects, which may be found in every collection that is to be met with; on which latter account any number of volumes formed from these TRIFLES, whether under their general title or under such which may be adapted in the additional ones intended to be given will be infinitely cheaper than an equal number of pages of any general collection.

Of the preceding Subjects of the IMPORTANT TRIFLES

1. On the VICISSITUDES of FORTUNE.
2. A short System of the Beauties and Benefits of the BRITANNIC CONSTITUTION.